

or to be prepared for an unexpected emergency. And, folks, that is just a smart thing to do.

Well, if you deposit or withdraw more than \$10,000 over the course of a year, the Biden administration wants the IRS to be able to spy on you. To put this number into perspective, if you were renting an apartment in Iowa, the average annual cost to do so is just over \$10,000 per year. That is the threshold, folks.

Why does Washington even need to know this information about you?

The Treasury Department says this is necessary to make sure “the top one percent . . . can’t evade” paying taxes.

You heard that right. The Biden administration thinks you are rich if, over the course of an entire year, you either save or spend \$10,000. They might even have the IRS audit you for tax evasion.

Treating American citizens like criminal suspects for the innocent act of using a bank account is, quite frankly, un-American.

The Biden administration has been up front about its motive here. Washington Democrats are looking to collect as many tax dollars as possible to finance their never-ending reckless spending spree. And as a direct result of these budget busting bills, government inflation is driving up prices and limiting availability of everyday essentials.

Let’s take a look at life in Joe Biden’s America. The cost of food, the cost of rent, the cost of nearly everything just keeps going up and up. Meanwhile, the size of many products is shrinking, which means you have to work harder, pay more, and get a heck of a lot less. It is even costing more just to get to the grocery store. Gas is now more than \$3 a gallon, the highest price in 6 years. And this really shouldn’t come as a surprise.

Remember, on his first day on the job, President Biden signed an Executive order to end the Keystone XL Pipeline, killing thousands of jobs and limiting our access to oil and gas supplies. And while costs keep going up, just finding what you need or want has become yet another ordeal.

As a result of Biden bucks, which paid people not to work for most of the year, many products are in short supply or unavailable altogether. Shipping companies are even facing equipment shortages and, of course, they remain understaffed.

And, folks, this crisis isn’t ending anytime soon. The upcoming holiday season is already being referred to as “Biden’s Blue Christmas.” The White House is even warning there will be items people can’t get for Christmas. So let’s just hope for the sake of the kids who have been good all year that Biden’s broken supply chain problems don’t extend all the way to the North Pole.

And speaking of kids, let’s take a look at what might happen to parents who take a vocal role in their chil-

dren’s education. It is a good thing for parents to be active in their children’s education, and it comes as no surprise that they can often get very passionate about the subject.

So imagine going to a school board meeting and exercising your right to express your concerns about a new policy or proposed curriculum at your child’s school, but instead of having your issue addressed, you find yourself labeled as a domestic terrorist.

Yeah, folks, you heard that right—a domestic terrorist under investigation by our Nation’s chief law enforcement agency.

It sounds insane, right?

But it is a crazy reality today. President Biden’s Attorney General is mobilizing the FBI against parents who make their voices heard at school board meetings.

Let me be very clear about this. Violence or even threats of violence against school board members, teachers, or any public official should never ever be tolerated; but neither should threats of intimidation by the government to coerce parents to surrender control over their children’s education.

This is happening at the same time the FBI announced the largest spike in homicides ever recorded. I am not talking about this year, folks. I am not talking about last year, 4, 5, 6 years past. We are talking about the largest spike in homicides ever recorded.

With murder and violent crimes increasing, the President’s liberal allies in Congress are threatening to defund the police. That approach certainly is not going to secure life, liberty, or the pursuit of happiness.

Folks, all of these disturbing trends we just talked about are stark reminders that the principles our Nation was founded upon are not guaranteed. Every generation of Americans owes it to the next generation to preserve and strengthen the blessings of liberty we were fortunate enough to inherit.

I’d expect government coercion, State snooping, empty shelves, and out-of-control inflation in nations with socialist regimes, like China, Cuba, and Venezuela. But regardless of who our President may be, we must never ever accept any of these as part of life in America.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 10 minutes on the matter at hand.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FREEDOM TO VOTE ACT

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I come to the floor to speak in support of what is right before us right now, and that is, proceeding to debate legislation that is critical to our democracy, the Freedom to Vote Act, which I introduced with the members of the voting rights working group assembled by Leader SCHUMER. That would be Senators MANCHIN, MERKLEY, PADILLA,

KING, KAINE, TESTER, and WARNOCK. We all have our names on this bill. We all feel very strongly about this bill. Why? Because the freedom to vote is fundamental to all of our freedoms, and it is currently under attack.

Since the 2020 elections, we have seen a persistent and coordinated assault on the freedom to vote, but it has been under attack for much longer, as States have closed polling locations on a massive scale and purged hundreds of thousands of voters from the rolls.

As foreign adversaries have actually attempted to interfere in our elections, these attacks on our democracy demand a Federal response. When you have one State attacked by a foreign adversary, when they try to get into voter rolls in Illinois or Hawaii, are we going to expect those States to respond on their own? When you have an assault, a coordinated assault, on voting rights, so you have similar bills introduced across the country to limit drop-off boxes; when you have coordinated attacks to limit vote-by-mail; when you have coordinated attacks to limit registration to vote, it demands a Federal response.

What is amazing about our Constitution is that the Founding Fathers anticipated this because right in the Constitution, it says that Congress—this place where we work—can make and alter the laws regarding Federal elections. It is bulletproof. It has been upheld time and time again.

The urgent need for action could not be more serious. With over 400 bills having been introduced in nearly every State to limit the freedom to vote—over 30 of those have been signed into law—with redistricting underway to draw congressional maps that will define our democracy for the next decade—and the first primary for the 2022 elections is in a little over 4 months in Texas—we must act now.

It has been over 9 months since that violent mob of insurrectionists stormed into this Chamber, opened up people’s desks, and sat where the Presiding Officer is sitting right now. They desecrated our Capitol, the temple of our democracy. This was not just an attack on a building. It was an attack on our Republic. It was an attack on public servants, police officers who were serving us that day.

As I said from the inaugural stage just 2 weeks later under that beautiful blue sky at the very place where you could still see the spray paint on the columns, where we stood in front of makeshift windows—where we stood together, leaders of both political parties in both Chambers and from across the Nation—I said: This is the day our democracy picks itself up, brushes itself off, and does what America always does—goes forward as one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

We took back our democracy that day. With this Freedom to Vote Act, which includes provisions that have the support of 78 percent of Americans

who favor 2 weeks of early voting and 83 percent of voters who support public disclosure of campaign contributions because they believe the people should be running the government, not lobbyists and not outside groups, we will take it back again from those who are trying to take away the people's constitutional right to vote.

With 19 States having enacted laws this year to roll back the freedom to vote, we can't simply sit back and watch our democracy be threatened. Whether it be threatened with bear spray, crowbars, axes, or whether it be threatened with long lines, no ballot drop-off boxes, and secret money, we must stand up for our democracy whether we are Democrats or Republicans or Independents. That is what our country is about.

When we are faced with a coordinated effort across our country to limit the freedom to vote, we must stand up and do what is right. But, as we have seen in States like Georgia and Florida and Iowa and Montana and last month in Texas, we are up against a coordinated attack. As Senator Reverend RAPHAEL WARNOCK has said, it is really quite simple: Some people don't want some people to vote. That is what this is about.

What is this Freedom to Vote Act about? It is about minimum standards for voting. You know, it is 15 days of early voting. My State votes up to 40 days. That is not what we put in this bill. We put minimum standards in this bill, ensuring voters have access to at least 2 weeks of early voting so they can cast their mail-in ballot without an excuse—something people were able to use as a way to safely vote in the middle of a public health crisis. They did it in record numbers in the middle of a crisis because they believed in our democracy no matter which way they voted. Why would we take away that right from them now when we are seeing a curtailing of that right in many States across this country?

It counters partisan interference in election administrations, makes sure that these super PACs and issue advocacy groups that hide behind veils have to show who is giving them the money, and prohibits partisan gerrymandering.

Then we listened to secretaries of state across this country, Democrats and Republicans. We listened to our colleague Senator MANCHIN, who proudly has his name on this bill. So what did we do? We made changes to this bill. It provides flexibility for small and vote-by-mail jurisdictions on early voting. It makes it easier to implement automatic voter registration. It creates a new flexible source of Federal funding to help our States. It ensures election officials can use best practices for maintaining accurate and up-to-date voter rolls.

It is important to recognize that the Freedom to Vote Act is the first piece of voting rights legislation this Congress to come to the Senate floor with the support of all 50 Senate Democrats.

Now, our Republican colleagues may not agree with everything in this bill. OK. Then don't be scared. Don't hide behind your desks. Don't deny us the right to simply debate this bill. Our leader, Senator SCHUMER, has made it very clear: We are open to amendments on this bill. We welcome your amendments. We are not putting a limit on amendments.

So why would you shy away from debating this bill—unless you just don't want the American people to hear the truth; unless you don't want the stories told about what is going on in places like Georgia, where voters are now being asked to put their birth date on the outside of the inside envelope. Maybe you don't want to have the stories told about how voters in Wisconsin almost—except for the Governor stopping it in its tracks, voters in Wisconsin almost were limited in the entire city of Milwaukee to one drop-off box. That bill passed their legislature. That is what we are talking about here.

So let's have this debate. Let's hear the argument. Let's not stop the debate over the fundamental right to vote that our entire democracy is founded on.

If our Republican colleagues have constructive ideas on ways to improve this legislation and if they are willing to work with us on amendments, then we are prepared to hear them. We are simply asking them to open up the debate. Instead, it will be more people standing in line, like they did in Wisconsin in the primary, in homemade masks and garbage bags in a rainstorm just to exercise their right to vote. It is going to be people who are told, like they just were in Georgia: You can't even vote on weekends in the runoff period. It is going to be people who served in our military who have to wait in line in the hot Sun, wait for hours to vote. That didn't happen when they signed up to serve our country, but it happens when they try to vote.

Let's have that debate. Americans have fought and died to protect our freedom to vote. They have done so on the battlefield, and they did so in marches during the civil rights movement. Fifty-six years after the Voting Rights Act was passed by this Chamber and signed into law, we cannot shut down the debate.

Our Nation was founded on the ideals of democracy, and we have seen for ourselves in this very building that we can't afford to take that for granted. We can't do it when legislators and Members of Congress get to pick and choose who is going to be able to vote easily. We do it by debating real ideas and standing on the shoulders of those who went out to vote. That is what a democracy is about.

I urge my colleagues to open up the debate, to not be afraid and shut down the debate, to not hide under their desks, to not put their heads down. I urge them to simply open up the debate.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON LHAMON NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Lhamon nomination?

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 50, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 419 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Rosen
Blumenthal	Kaine	Sanders
Booker	Kelly	Schatz
Brown	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cardin	Leahy	Sinema
Carper	Lujan	Smith
Casey	Manchin	Stabenow
Coons	Markey	Tester
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Feinstein	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Hassan	Padilla	Wyden
Heinrich	Peters	

NAYS—50

Barrasso	Graham	Portman
Blackburn	Grassley	Risch
Blunt	Hagerty	Romney
Boozman	Hawley	Rounds
Braun	Hoeven	Rubio
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Capito	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Collins	Kennedy	Shelby
Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Lee	Thune
Cramer	Lummis	Tillis
Crapo	Marshall	Toomey
Cruz	McConnell	Tuberville
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young
Fischer	Paul	

The VICE PRESIDENT. On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 50.

The Senate being equally divided, the Vice President votes in the affirmative, and the nomination is confirmed.

The nomination was confirmed.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

CLOTURE MOTION

The VICE PRESIDENT. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 125, S. 2747, a bill to expand Americans' access to the ballot box and reduce the influence of big money in politics, and for other purpose.

Charles E. Schumer, Amy Klobuchar, Alex Padilla, Margaret Wood Hassan,